

**National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2003**

Board Members	Federal Officials
Bill Gast	Dave Henderson, DFO
Gene Stackle	Gay Ernst, Center Director
Marv Sumner	Debbie Lyons, Facilitator
Peggi Timm	Peggy Diegan, Notetaker
Fred Warner, Jr	
Daryl Whiteley	

OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA REVIEW

Debbie Lyons

- Debbie reviewed the agenda.

INTRODUCTIONS

Debbie Lyons

REVIEW OF NOTEBOOK CONTENTS

Peggy Diegan

- Reviewed Advisory Board notebook sent out to all board members.
- Added meeting ground rules to book

ADVISORY BOARD HISTORY

Gay Ernst

- Board first met in 1997
 - Developed Strategic Plan in 1998.
- The last Board meeting was February 20, 2001.
- The charter has to be renewed every two years.
 - Current charter was signed in 2002.
- Meetings were delayed because the members had to be appointed.
 - This occurred in July 2003

Dave Henderson

- Because of the RAC Chair's meeting in Washington D.C. the administration was advised that it is not acceptable to take so long to fill these positions.
- Dave Henderson will be meeting/talking to Karen Woods the Forest Supervisor of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest to select someone to represent the Forest Service that will have the necessary time to attend these Advisory Board meetings.

CENTER OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Gay Ernst

- Two center positions are currently vacant.
 - The Assistant Director position.
 - Getting ready to interview for the Assistant Director position.

- Could be on board by the end of October.
- The Supervisory Maintenance position is also vacant.
- Competitive Sourcing.
 - Studying maintenance positions bureau wide.
 - These positions are based on competition and the State Director makes the decision of what our organization should look like.
 - The BLM bid is called the Most Efficient Organization (MEO) and needs to provide the best value for the government.
 - Competitive Sourcing will change the look of the organization.
 - NHOTIC has twelve fulltime employees, three are in maintenance.
 - Currently, the center is shortanded because of these vacancies.
 - Congressman Walden and Senator Smith have been briefed on Competitive Sourcing as well as Judge Grasty in Harney County.
 - They are all concerned about the impact to the small communities.
 - The good news is that the numbers have been relaxed and the administration is going with agency specific objectives instead of an exact number of jobs that will be impacted.

Question: Are there local folks that can take these jobs?

- If BLM prevails then the employees are local but staff may be reduced.
- If a contract prevails, then it could be a statewide contract that may not use local employees.
- The Forest Service is considering studying the fire organization and because of combined positions this will also affect BLM.
- Also studying engineering this year.
- Contracts will be for five years then there will be renegotiation going on.
- Function of the center may change and things may work differently.
- There is no public input on this.
- The goal of the administration is to run the government like a business and become more efficient.
- Visitation to the center is expected to be slightly under last year's 70,000 visitors.
 - Visitation is expected to level out to 60,000 visitors per year.
- Marketing through partnerships is being done.
 - Could always use more dollars.
 - The center spent \$50,000 dollars on marketing this year.
- Fees are not down in as large a percentage as visitation because of changes in fees.
 - No longer honoring the \$10.00 per car load.
- Also it is more efficient to collect dollars at the Center instead of at the booth at the bottom of the hill.
- All fees collected are returned to the center.
 - These fees allow the center to bring performers to the stage.
- Donations are not much \$2,000-3,000 dollars per year.
- High Desert Museum in Bend says their visitation was down 20% compared to NHOTIC's 3% in 2002.
- School kids make up a large number of the visitation.
- Fee demo-needs to be discussed during the strategic plan.
- Permanent staffing is the same now as it was in the beginning.

- Used more volunteers in the beginning.
- Center is close to eleven years old and things that are expensive need repaired.
 - Other areas of concern are how to come up with dollars to repair roads, windows, roofs, etc.
 - Need to keep the maintenance standard up.
 - Stiff competition to get dollars for maintenance within the bureau.
 - Districts have to write a justification to get the dollars.
 - Health and safety issues usually come to the top of priority.
 - Problem in the system is there are not dollars set aside for emergencies.
 - Center operates on a \$1.2 million BLM budget.
 - Gift shop makes good dollars compared to the number of employees.
 - Fee collections are going up because of the change from paying by the carload to paying for each visitor.

FACILITY WALK-ABOUT

Group

- Took a tour of the NHOTIC compound with Center Director, Gay Ernst, to see first hand areas of concern.
 - Viewed the disrepair of stairs going down to the mine.
 - Viewed fire protection projects on the compound.
 - Viewed future site of native garden

PUBLIC COMMENT-NONE

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW/STATUS

Debbie Lyons

- **Revisit Goal 1: Increase Visitation to a Sustained Level of 200,000/Year by 12/31/2002.**
 - **Objective 1: Marketing - Revisit**
 - **Action a:**
 - Marketing is now 50% of the duties for the Assistant Center Manager.
 - **Action b:**
 - The 2002 Marketing Plan was implemented and the 2003 Market Plan is being developed.
 - Need to identify stakeholders and seek help in developing a plan.
 - Suggestion: Develop a local guide book.
 - Visitation needs to be studied to determine a plan to increase.
 - **Objective 2: Operations**
 - Currently there is one free fee day each month of the year.
 - Local participation in this.
 - **Objective 3:**
 - **No action**
 - **Objective 4: Funding**
 - **Revisit this.**
- **Revisit Goal 2-Provide for Capital Expansion and On-Going Operations Support.**
 - **Objective 1: Develop and implement plans**

- Ongoing process need to remain flexible enough to cover new issues.
 - Trail Tenders working on project to expand the Gift Shop.
 - Education committee wants to expand the Educational Program at the Center.
 - Comprehensive Plan would need to be developed.
 - Result might be an Educational wing added to the center.
- **Objective 2: Finance**
 - Suggestion to get in touch with original contributors with a progress report on the Center.
 - Generate interest and solicit additional donations.
 - Trail Tenders current project is to expand the gift shop.
- **Goal 3: Maximize the Economic Benefit of the Center Upon the Community and the Region.**
 - **Objective 1: “Speak” to visitors.....**
 - Story of Center currently being developed.
 - Buttons that say “Ask me about NHOTIC and Baker County”
 - Quality Service Initiative still needs done.
 - Previous marketing plan included a billboard that NHOTIC would be featured.
 - Failed because it became a competition for positions on the billboard.
 - Did not understand that if NHOTIC was successful they would be successful too.
 - Need to revisit what we have done and where we are now.
 - Free fee days are one per month and they are published.
 - Locals participate in this more than the general public.
 - Objective 1 needs to be an on going process and refined, but flexible enough to cover new issues.
 - May revisit to the standpoint of more flexible language.
 - Objective 1-2-3
 - We need to do more with the upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration
 - Currently working on an exhibit that will open in February 2004 \$75,000 dollars will be spent on this and the 2004 marketing plan needs to include this.
 - NHOTIC may not be participating enough in the community.
 - Refine language in objective 1
 - New curriculum to share with the schools is at the printers.
 - This is new and can be downloaded from the NHOTIC website.
 - Will provide Board with a copy when comes from printer.
 - Need to come up with another theme/brochure on what needs to be done next.
- **Goal 4: Maintain and Expand Education and Interpretive Outreach**
 - **Objective 2**
 - Need to participate in Career Days at both the high school and the college in La Grande.
 - Participants may represent the BLM as much as the Trail Center.
 - There are currently three Interns at the center.

- **Objective 3**
 - Volunteer Recruitment Action Plan is in place and younger folks are signing up.
 - Recently completed a new cooperative agreement with the Trail Tenders.
- **Revisit Goal 5: Enhance the Community’s “Service of Ownership” of the Center.**
 - Minutes from Board meeting is at the library so local folks can see what is being done.
 - Need to have a speaker at the local meeting of Friday Forum to increase awareness of the center.
 - Need to have a NHOTIC Advisory Board member join the BLM in challenging/inviting the local service clubs to visit the center.
 - Center needs to get on the agenda of the local Chamber of Commerce.
 - All American Highway, was designated in 2001, goes through Baker City.
 - This is not being promoted by the community special events.
 - Speakers Bureau-on a rotating basis have a Board Member join a BLM person to attend this service club.
 - Create a package of what message needs delivered.
 - BLM can provide power point presentations.
- **Revisit Goal 6: Contribute to the Local Community’s Sense of Identification with the Community.**
 - **Objective 1**
 - Visit the use of logos,etc.
 - Get businesses to include on their letterheads NHOTIC.
 - Lobby to make Baker County the County of the Oregon Trail.
 - Baker County Unlimited could help spearhead this.
 - NHOTIC to use partner logo’s as well as other businesses.
 - Need to have the Oregon Trail highlighted on Highway 84 signs.
 - Need to make a request to ODOT.
 - If they do this it would fill goal 5 and 6.
 - Discover adventure in Baker County.
 - Wintertime NHOTIC does not bring folks to Baker County, winter sports/activities do.
 - At one time Union Pacific loaned LaGrande two train passenger cars to travel to their sister city, Salt Lake City, UT to promote their area.
 - Baker City needs a sister city so they can ask Union Pacific to make a special occasion and bring a two carloads of folks from a sister city to enjoy the Baker City area.

COMMITTEE STATUS

Debbie Lyons

- **Visitation** is a valid committee and there is still a need.
- Center is represented in the partnership funds meeting.
 - Lots of foundations have shown an interest but nothing has come of this.
 - Ford family is currently showing interest.

- **Education**-Peggi Timm is the only one on this committee.
 - Wants to work towards a specific wing for education at the center.
 - The Ford family is a good place to get help.
 - Other organizations could be included.
 - Need someone to write grants.
 - NHOTIC educational program works well with the local museum in Baker City.
 - Teachers love the educational package that NHOTIC has.
 - Typically student tours go to NHOTIC in the morning and then to the museum in Baker City in the afternoon.
 - Current program was developed for Fourth grade teachers/students.
 - Elder Hostel could also be developed.
 - Sarah LeCompte and Pam Patterson are the leads at the center for education.
- Need to address how these committees tie in with the strategic plan.
- **Capital Expansion:**
 - Ideas need to come from the whole board and not a separate committee.
 - So disband this committee and all board members work on this.
- Any space available would allow the local biologist to help with some good education.
- **Community liaison:** does there need to be a committee?
 - Yes, there is a need to do this.
 - Help folks realize what is going on.
 - Need more folks on this?
 - Include Visitation committee members on this committee too.
 - Need to organize another community forum.
 - Get vision higher on the wall so everyone from the whole town supports this.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Debbie Lyons

- Review the strategic plan as a group and then have the committees know where to go.
- Would like to have shorter meetings.
 - Have future meetings from 8am to 12am.
- Need guidelines to run the meetings and follow these.
- Accepted the operating guidelines and interpersonal relationship list from the Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council.
- The NHOTIC Advisory Board members commit to the following principles when conducting business:
 - Don't interrupt others (side conversation)
 - Listen with respect
 - 3 minute "floor time"
 - Focus on subject, not person
 - Don't get personal (in confrontations)
 - Voice your opinion
 - Focus on issue
 - Strive for common ground

- Be recognized before speaking
- Operational norms included in book.
- Next meeting do a four hour meeting and complete the Strategic Plan.
- Needs time in the meeting to discuss new issues.
 - Will include a roundtable in each meeting with timeframes attached
 - Will create a BIN list during the meeting

MEETINGS FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR:

- Meetings will be held at the Sunridge Inn, Baker City, OR in the coming year from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
 - **September 29, 2003**
 - **December 18, 2003**
 - **March 4, 2004**
 - **June 3, 2004**
 - **Sept 2, 2004**

OFFICERS

Debbie Lyons

- Officers will be selected at the December 18, 2003 meeting.

ROUNDTABLE:

Peggi Timm

- Suggestion that someone from BLM attend the 4th grade teacher's convention in Portland to promote the Center.
 - Gay Ernst will check into this.

Daryl Whiteley

- Need delegation from NHOTIC/Baker City to attend the Lewis and Clark Association and OR/CA Trail Association convention in Vancouver to promote the area. This convention is scheduled in August 04.
 - Baker City is up for hosting this convention in 2007 or 2008.
- August 22, at 6:00 pm Gay Ernst going away party.
 - Opportunity to present or say a few words at this evening.
- Hopes that the BLM gets good suggestions/advice out of this committee.
 - Daryl appreciates what has been done so far.
- The committee is well balanced with diverse sectors of the community

Gene Stackle

- Thanked and said goodbye to Gay Ernst for a job well done at the center.

Bill Gast

- Also expressed appreciation to Gay for a job well done.
- Hope that what the committee does here is a contribution to the BLM.
- Most people like to operate loosely, up to the BLM to keep committee on track to get the best help possible.

Marv Sumner

- Enjoyed the refreshing things and new ideas that Gay did at the Center.
- Ditto on helping BLM the best the board can.

Fred Warner, JR

- Natural place for him to take the lead on capital expansion because of his ties with the county.
- Hope the committee gets more focused.
- The Center will always be the focus for the community.
- He will engage the movers and shakers in the community to work with the BLM to make this Center the best it can be.
- Baker County considers this their Center and they need to focus more on promoting the center.

DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL**Dave Henderson**

- His goal for the fiscal year is to get as involved with the Advisory Boards as much as possible.
- He takes this role really seriously and values the time it takes for board members to be involved.
- Vale District has three Advisory Council/Boards that cover the district.
- It is fairly clear who the constituents are for this board and this board is focused on what needs to be done.
- The Forest Service Board position needs filled as soon as possible.
 - In Dave's meeting with the Forest Supervisor he will stress the need to select someone that will attend all of the board meetings and have an interest in the Trail Center.
 - Board may need to help push the nomination through Washington, DC.
- Will get the paperwork done as soon as possible for Gay's replacement.
 - In the meantime, Sarah LeCompte, is going to be the Acting Center Manager.
 - Within 90 days the second in command employee will be on board.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- Look at changes in the way the federal agencies can do marketing.
- Strategic Plan
- Roundtable

Adjourned at 2:00 PM.

